

PRESIDENT GIRI HOLDS BRIEF FOR CAPITALISTS

In the present situation when the country is seething with discontent of the people due to abnormal rise in prices of all essential commodities, particularly during the last few years of Sm. Gandhi's rule, when drought and flood have created famine condition in some parts of the country, when the starving people are actually coming out in the open field of struggle to register their strong indignation against the demagogic claims and tall promises of the Congress leaders and the anti-people policies of fake socialism of the Congress governments, the eve-of-the-independence-day message of President V. V. Giri is a frivolous attempt to bypass the burning problems confronting the lives of common men in our country. It is worse. It is an evil omen suggesting fresh attacks to further curtail whatever little fundamental democratic rights of the toiling people are still left after twenty-six years of Congress misrule in our country.

Although some strong words have been used by the President against the anti-social activities of the hoarders and black-marketeers, who have been described as "enemies of society", in this speech, it is not difficult to understand that it is a cheap clap-trap meant to deceive the people groaning under the weight of spiralling prices of essential commodities. If the President regards the hoarders, speculators, profiteers and black-marketeers as the enemies of society, how is it that these enemies of society can carry on their anti-social activities with impunity under the very nose of his government protected by the long arms of the so-called custodians of law and order? Is it not a fact that during the last twenty-six years since independence, black-marketing has flourished and the hoarders, speculators, monopolists and price-manipulators have tremendously prospered because of the policies of the ruling Congress party and the governments run by it at the Centre and in different states? Can the President deny that during all these years, as a result of anti-people pro-capitalist policies and acts by the Congress governments, the people have

been fleeced to the utmost to fatten the purse of the monopolists and further secure their position in society? There is no denying the fact that the root cause of the present unbearable condition of our people and their grinding poverty is the existing capitalist socio-political-economic system in our country. The anti-people pro-capitalist pro-black-marketeer policies of the Congress governments have added fuel to the fire. In the circumstances, the professed pledge to curb profiteering and punish the black-marketeers on the part of the Congress leaders, not excluding the President and the Prime Minister of India, is an empty talk meant not to be put into action but to befool the masses. Had they really been honest and sincere to check hoarding and black-marketing, they would have taken stern appropriate measures to do it. They have not done anything of the sort. On the contrary, they and their governments have given these enemies of society a free hand to hoard essential commodities, create their artificial scarcity in market, manipulate their prices, recklessly plunder the people and reap maximum profits. They and

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Under Congress Rule Police Behaves As Criminals

Patna, August 25—The Committee of the MLAs set up by the Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly to enquire into the "alleged brutal assault, looting of property and rape of Harijan women" by the policemen on May 2 last in the village of Gahlour in Monghyr district has submitted its report to the House. The Committee in its 100-page report has found the police guilty of looting, rape and other sadistic crimes.

On the basis of an intensive enquiry into the incident, the Committee has come to the conclusion that (1) the police is guilty of fabricating the FIR relating to the alleged assault of a police constable by the villagers of Gahlour, (2) the police is guilty of severely assaulting the villagers including womenfolk, (3) the police is guilty of committing rape on at least eleven girls and women of the village who told the Committee that they had been raped by the policemen during their nocturnal raid of the village, (4) the police is guilty of trying to suppress facts and hide the entire case and of not taking prompt action when the matter was brought to their notice, (5) the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Jamui, is responsible for the illegal raid on the village, (6) the DIG of Police, Eastern Range, is guilty of making attempt to justify the illegal police action and (7) the medical officer of Jamui, Dr. S. Purkhait, is guilty of giving false medical report to assist the police.

It may be recalled that the present Ministry in Bihar tried its best to prevent the inquiry by this Committee of

the House and to justify police action and white-wash the extremely shameful and brutal crimes committed by the police on the Harijan men and women of Gahlour village. It may seem unbelievable that in a civilised country the policemen, who are supposed to maintain law and order, should themselves break the law, make an illegal raid on a village at dead of night, ransack the houses of the poor villagers, loot whatever little belongings they possess, mercilessly assault them and rape the women and the girls and that thereafter the top police officials, the bureaucrats, the administration and the Ministry should collude with the police in falsifying the records or try to cover up the case and justify the illegal police vandalism, as the case may be. But however unbelievable this may seem, it is a dry reality that this is not the first instance of the police committing such criminal acts. In our country the police, still carrying the colonial heritage of the bygone days of foreign imperialist rule in our country, more often than not, behaves as

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In a Capitalist Society Workers Cannot Sacrifice their

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their governments, in place of dealing these enemies of society with a strong hand, have distributed patronage and conferred titles like Padma Bibhushan on them. While in Congress regime tens of thousands of political, trade union and peasant workers opposed to the anti-people Congress rule have been detained without trial in jails under the black laws, not a single monopolist, a really big guy, has been arrested or detained on charge of profiteering and black-marketing. Only some small fries have, at some times, been arrested on charge of black-marketing most of whom have subsequently been released also. In the face of these facts will it be unjust to take the President's words against the profiteers and black-marketeers as nothing but an eye-wash to deceive the people and mollify their indignation against the Congress and the Congress governments for abnormal rise in prices and consequent hardship of theirs?

A few days back President Giri was reported (Hindusthan Standard dated August 12) to have observed that he would be happy, "if every citizen of India is enabled to live in at least the conditions that prevailed in the jails when we all went to jail in the national struggle, when one got a meal, regular work and minimum amenities." This is an open admission by the President that in free India, after twenty-six years since independence, our people are not getting even those things which a prisoner in a jail under British imperialist rule used to get, even though several five year plans have been implemented with so much fan-fare and drum-beating. It is also an indication of what the Congress leaders actually mean by socialism. Congress-brand democratic socialism does not then mean eman-

cipation of our people from all sorts of exploitation of man by man and a decent life with continuously improved standard of living; it sets its aim at a standard that prevailed in jails under foreign imperialist rule. What sort of 'socialist' objective is this only the Congress leaders can explain. But Mr. Giri did not stop there. He conveyed to the people in the message that "We have striven hard all these years to end poverty, ignorance and disease among the vast millions of our population. *** Several steps have been taken to ward off distress and to reduce the sufferings of the afflicted." Does it not give rise to doubt about the honesty of the Congress leaders when such palpable falsehood is dished out shamelessly by the President to the people? It is an undeniable fact that the poverty is not the disease; it is a symptom of a disease from which our society is suffering. That disease is the exploitative capitalist system obtaining in our country. To strive hard to end poverty requires one to strive hard to end the capitalist order in our country. Have the Congress, its governments and its leaders moved even an inch to end the existing capitalist order in India? Not at all. On the contrary, they have done all they can do to maintain, consolidate and further strengthen the capitalist rule which have resulted in more exploitation of the toiling people. It is true that as a result of more labour and sacrifice by our people, the national wealth and income have gone up considerably since the year of independence. But into whose pockets have the increased wealth and income gone? During the twenty-two years since when the first five year plan had been

Right to Strike

introduced, more and more of our people have been plunged into more and more intensely grinding poverty whereas the handful of monopolists have succeeded in amassing huge wealth and property at the cost of the people, a fact which even the most shameless of the shameless Congress leaders will find it hard to dispute.

It is very often said that increase in production and national wealth would improve the condition of our people and eliminate their poverty. This is a fraud and this fraud has been practised on our people all these years. President Giri, who was once a Labour leader, has tried to give currency to that falsehood in his speech when he observed that "Indeed, our economic prosperity depends mainly on the workers' capacity to produce more". He further stated that the primary cause of the current spurt in prices was the scarcity of the essential commodities and, hence, there was the necessity to increase production for more well-being of the people. This observation by Mr. Giri not only does not reflect objective reality but also is a blatant lie. Despite many unfair practices by the capitalist class, production and the productivity of labour have significantly increased. But with increase in production the miseries of the people have not decreased, rather they have gone up. Increase in wealth and production in a capitalist society does not, by itself, mean increase in well-being of the people. This is not just a theoretical proposition but an actual fact which no honest person can ignore. As such, even though production has increased many times in our country, our people are still forced to lead a sub-human life.

As for the industrial

workers, it is now admitted even by the official circles that with the abnormal rise in prices of all essential commodities the gap between the actual cost of living and their money wages is increasing and, as a result of it, their real wages are declining in spite of some increase in their money wages. To check this continuous fall in their real wages and condition of living, the workers cannot but take recourse to various forms of struggle against their employers. Strike is one of these forms of struggle. It should be realised that the workers resort to strike not for the fun of it but because of there being no other and better way at the moment to resist the mounting attacks by the employer class backed by the Congress governments on their living conditions. It should also be realised that in a capitalist society the interest of the working class and that of the capitalist employer class are irreconcilable. So long as capitalism will exist, the capitalist class will continue to exploit the working class and try to encroach upon the latter's hard-won rights as a means to earn maximum profit possible under the circumstances. This being the reality, the working class can ill afford to sacrifice its inalienable right to strike. Only when socialism will be established and the working class along with other sections of the toiling people will become the master of building society in their best interest, strike will lose its utility as a form of struggle. So, Mr. Giri's exhortation to the workers that they should voluntarily accept a moratorium on strike for a period of at least three years and, by desisting from strike, should promote a sense of partnership with the capitalists and deem themselves as honoured citizens is not merely a utopian concept but a clever subterfuge to replace the scientific

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Ideal of Communism and Proletarian Internationalism Alone can Solve Present Crisis of Morality and Values

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concept of class struggle by the unscientific make-believe theory of class harmony and disarm the working class ideologically, politically and organisationally in the face of intensification of capitalist crisis and mounting attacks by the ruling bourgeoisie on the working class. This call for moratorium on strike by President Giri supported by Sm. Gandhi is an ominous sign. It is indicative of further curtailment of the workers' right to strike when the Congress governments at the Centre and in different states are increasingly using the DIR and other Emergency provisions to ban strikes, brutally suppress legitimate democratic movements by the workers and safeguard nakedly the interests of the capitalist class. The banning of strikes of the railway men and the Food Corporation employees, the suppression of the Press workers' strike in West Bengal, declaring the movement by the employees of the Indian Oxygen Co., illegal under the DIR are only a few instances of the Congress governments' recent moves to take away the right of the workers to strike. As against these attacks on the working class, the Congress governments have not applied the DIR against any employer for not depositing Provident Fund and ESI dues, not paying due wages and bonus to the workers, not implementing awards and agreements and for not observing so many other statutory obligations of the employers which are all punishable offences.

It is not just this curtailment of the right to strike that has been resorted to by the ruling Congress party and its governments. On the one hand, they are more and more strengthening the police, the military and the bureaucracy and, on the other hand, they are taking

away and eroding most of the fundamental democratic rights of the people on this or that plea. It is quite clear now that the ruling Congress and its governments in the aggregate interest of Indian capitalism are taking the country along the path of fascism. So, unless the left and democratic parties and forces in our country combine and come forward to resist this march of fascism, the cause of united democratic movements against reaction and vested interests and the genuine interests of the people will suffer a setback in the days ahead. This should be realised particularly by those so-called revolutionary parties in our country which till the other day had discovered progressiveness and "healthy trend" within the Indira Congress or even now sees it as also by those leaders who think that at present there is no possibility of emergence of any left united front on the basis of an agreed programme and advocate united movement on the basis of issues even with a section of the Congress.

In his speech President Giri had also said that "we must improve the general character of the people. We really have to go back if possible to the Gandhian times." In his eve-of-the-independence-day message also he had laid stress on honesty and observance of self-discipline at all levels otherwise "moral stature gets seriously eroded." But if moral character of the people has deteriorated, who is to blame for that? Before the independence of the country our people were not morally depraved. If after independence their moral standard has fallen, the rulers of the country are to be blamed. The honesty and self-discipline the Congress leaders and ministers are practising in their everyday life and

exhibiting in public can hardly inspire our people to struggle for upliftment of their moral standard. These apostles of Gandhism do not practise in life what they profess in the public. They speak of plain living and high thinking but they lead the life of Maharajas with nothing high in their thinking. They simply run after power and pelf and are fattening themselves with rewards from monopolists for their services to the vested interests. With this character they not only cannot pull the country out of its present moral crisis but, on the contrary, are pushing the country headlong into the abysmal depth of corruption, selfishness, moral depravity and loss of sense of human values. The setting up of commissions and the observance of birth and death anniversaries of great men of the past will not succeed in stemming this tide of erosion of morality and human values.

Over and above this setting by the Congress leaders of very very bad examples before the people, which is responsible to a large extent for the present 'crisis of character' or 'crisis of values', it should be borne in mind that like all other phenomena, a given category of ideology also has its birth, growth and decay. A given category of ideology with its corresponding sense of morals and human values, which had at one time been able to lead the people in their struggle for social progress and uplift the character of the people, at another time, with change in situation, not only cannot guide the people but, on the contrary, becomes retrograde and a definite impediment against social progress. To cling to that ideal even then will objectively mean to downgrade the character and sense of values of the people and create obstacles to the forward march of the people for social progress. In our country, in the pre-independ-

dence days, the ideal of nationalism was a living force leading the people to struggle and sacrifice for national independence, thereby uplifting the character and sense of moral values of the people. With the attainment of independence, this ideal of nationalism has become a privilege and, hence, it can no longer lead the people in their struggle for further social progress. It has now become a reactionary idea, a weapon in the hands of the reactionary forces to safeguard their privileges and vested interests. If we go on clinging to this reactionary idea, it will lead to crisis of character and crisis of values and lead the country to moral depravity, as is the case now. A new category of ideology with its corresponding new sense of morality and human values is necessary for saving the country from this crisis of morality and providing the people with a suitable ideological weapon to carry the country forward to further social progress. The ideal of communism and proletarian internationalism alone can provide the weapon. Only by imbibing ourselves with this ideal can we save ourselves from the moral crisis, observe self-discipline, inculcate a spirit of dedication and sacrifice and carry forward our society. But the ideal prescribed by Mr. Giri to stave off the present crisis of character and crisis of values is not the ideal of communism and proletarian internationalism. He has preached the same old ideal of bourgeois nationalism which has now become a privilege and, as such, is incapable of leading the people to struggle for further social progress and is spreading poisonous weeds in every walk of life. The ruling capitalist class will go on exploiting and plundering the people, its political representative, the Congress, will

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Locomen's Movement —A Review

The recent agitation by the Loco Running Staff led by the All India Loco Running Staff Association, a category-wise organisation of the railwaymen, has drawn wide attention from all quarters. The deep-set discontent and genuine grievances of the locomen, in the general background of the justness of the basic demands of the 18 lakh railwaymen in our country, naturally drew our broad support and sympathy for a long time. We, accordingly, expressed our solidarity with them and supported their demands in the past as well as during their recent agitation. In the greater interest of the railwaymen and their united movements we were at the same time observing critically the time, method and tactics chosen and adopted, as the case may be, by the leadership of the AILRSA for this agitation.

The agitation of the locomen was started by this leadership at a time when the railwaymen as a whole were agitating on certain vital demands covering the interests of all sections of the railwaymen, like bonus for all, rejection of Third Pay Commission's recommendation and payment of need-based minimum wages to all, full neutralisation of the increase in the cost of living, reduction of working hours to not more than eight hours a day, democratisation of Service Conduct Rules, withdrawal of Emergency and the DIR including ban on strike of the railwaymen and FCI employees under the DIR, etc. In fact, a call for general strike by the railwaymen on these demands had already been given, the strike being scheduled to take place on and from 27th August. Some categories of the railwaymen, other than the locomen, also were agitating on their respective category-wise demands in addition to these general demands. In short, there came an opportunity to develop a broad struggle uniting all sections of the railwaymen against the capitalist Government and the bureaucratic Railway authorities with huge potentiality for the future course of action in the field of trade union movement in our country.

Genesis of the Agitation

The loco running staff form a category among the various categories of railway-

men and, for the matter of that, a very important category, including drivers, shunters, firemen, etc., but excluding even the loco shed maintenance staff. Indian railwaymen had traditionally been organised under industry-wise unions. Only during the last several years a new trend towards formation of category-wise unions, by dissociating from industry-wise big unions or Federations, has developed. This relatively new trend has been caused by various factors, one of the main factors being the composition and character of the leadership of the trade union movement by the railwaymen and the role of the leadership of different political parties and the trade union organisations led by them. The attitude and policy of the railway administration in disrupting the unity of the railwaymen as a whole have undeniably, influenced such a course of development. This aspect, of course, deserves a detailed and careful study to arrive at the truth.

Demands of the AILRSA

The demands on which the agitation was started by the AILRSA were as follows: (1) No victimisation (which includes withdrawal of cases started by the Railway administration and the police and of punitive actions like suspension, reversion, break of service, etc. for earlier agitations), (2) Reduction of working hours to 8 hours a day (this demand is not pecu-

liar to the locomen alone; there are many other categories of railwaymen whose demand it is) and (3) Pay protection and job guarantee for the staff decategorised on medical grounds.

From this it is clear that the leadership of the AILRSA did not raise or agitate for any of the general demands relating to payment of bonus to all, need-based minimum wages, the withdrawal of the DIR and the banning of strike of railwaymen, etc. Let alone these general demands of the railwaymen as a whole, the leadership of the AILRSA did not press for many vital demands of the loco running staff themselves, like mileage allowance, removal of disparity in pay for locomen doing the same nature of work, declaration of the work of the loco running staff as "intensive", etc. even though at the initial stage of the agitation the leadership were loud about these demands. The demand for recognition of the AILRSA was neither specifically raised nor pressed upon in course of negotiation.

Negotiation

The agitation took the form of mass "sick leave" (in some cases it was mass "leave") on and from 2nd August. It was then observed that with the starting of the agitation some top-ranking CPI and CPI(M) leaders initiated negotiation on behalf of the locomen with the Government. On 5th August CPI(M) leader, Shri Ramamurthy, announced that the Railway Minister had assured that there would be no victimisation of employees joining the agitation and that the Government was prepared to talk directly with "the leaders of the locomen". On 6th August, the Railway Minister told the Lok Sabha that there would be no victimisation, the arrested leaders of the locomen (not all arrested leaders) would be

released and that all facilities would be provided to the leaders, including those who were avoiding arrest, to come to Delhi for negotiation provided that the agitation was called off within 48 hours. The condition of 48 hours was subsequently withdrawn. Thus the stage was set for formal negotiation between the leaders of the AILRSA and the Government and, according to newspaper reports, the names of the "negotiators" were submitted to the Railway Minister by the leaders of the two parties, the CPI and the CPI(M).

On 9th August, CPI(M) leader, Shri Anandan Nambiar, told the newspaper reporters that unless the 3 main demands of the loco running staff were met, it would be difficult to end the agitation. These three main demands, according to him, were (1) 8 hours of work a day, additional hours of duty beyond 8 hours to be considered overtime work, (2) "representative channel" to put forward the grievances of the loco running staff to the Railway Ministry and (3) no victimisation of the agitating locomen. On 10th August, Shri M. R. Sabapathy, President of the AILRSA told reporters that "the main point of dispute related to the working hours. While the Association realised the practical difficulties in implementing an eight hour duty for the loco running staff, the Association wanted overtime allowance to be paid for extra hours of duty done by locomen".

It was clear that the leadership of the AILRSA had by their statements sacrificed almost all the demands of the loco running staff, including their demand for an eight hours duty a day. In the midst of negotiations on the demand for reduction of working hours to 8 hours a day, was it proper for the leaders to express the view

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that the locomen were prepared to work for more than 8 hours a day if overtime allowance was paid to them for extra hours of work? Was it not virtual waving of the demand for 8 hours a day duty, by throwing to the winds the very principle on which this demand rests? The demand for a duty of 8 hours a day is the demand of not the loco running staff alone; it is the unanimous demand of many other categories of railwaymen. During the pendency of consideration of this demand by the permanent negotiation machinery of the Railway Board and the recognised Federations of the railwaymen's Association, did not this watering down of the demand for a duty not exceeding 8 hours a day tantamount to backstabbing other categories of railwaymen who have demanded working hours of not more than 8 hours a day? Real interest of the workers demands reduction of working hours without affecting their earning adversely and not over-work even if paid, at the cost of their health. Besides, by agreeing to work for more than 8 hours a day if overtime allowance is paid how could the leaders of the AILRSA remain truthful to their earlier declarations that they wanted reduction of duty hours to create fresh employment avenues for thousands of unemployed youths?

The Agreement

The agitation was called off on 12th August night. The President of the AILASA did not disclose the terms of settlement on which the agitation was called off. It was left to the Railway Minister who on the next day declared in the Lok Sabha that the loco running staff, including locomen, guards and brakemen would not in future be required to work for more than 10 hours at a stretch. Details of the 10 hour schedule would be dis-

cussed and finalised by a committee to be appointed by the Government with five representatives from the loco running staff and equal number of representatives from the Railway administration within six weeks from the withdrawal of the agitation. (The Committee has already met once and the AILRSA's representatives have wanted time to submit their concrete suggestions about the 10-hour working schedule) The Railway Minister also announced that other issues would be considered by a 11-member Committee headed by the Deputy Minister for Railways. The Railway Minister further announced that the AILRSA had made an agreement with the government that the locomen would not go on strike or on any other direct action in the next three years. Thus, the agreement covered only three demands and issues, namely, (1) no victimisation, (2) working hours upto 10 hours a day at a stretch and (3) moratorium on strike by the locomen for the next three years, other demands and issues to be looked into by a 11-member committee.

Let us now examine the implication of this agreement in the light of real interests of the railwaymen in general and the locomen in particular.

Negotiating Channel

It is clear that the leadership of the AILRSA did not press for the recognition of the Association possibly because of the backstage parleys between the top leaders of the CPI and the CPI(M) on the one side and the Union Ministers on the other, as a consensus was reached on 6th August on the floor of the Parliament that there should be no category-wise union and that though the Railways would continue to receive grievances from every employee, negotiation, of course, would be held only with the recognised unions. This explains why Shri

Nambiar spoke of "representative channel" to put forward the grievance of the locomen. Although the agreement does not specify in express terms any negotiation channel yet the 11-member committee formed under the terms of the agreement may serve the purpose of the AILRSA in this direction for the purpose. So, this is, no doubt, a gain for them.

Victimisation Issue

Though the agreement states that there would be no victimisation of employees who had participated in the agitation yet it has dangerous loopholes. Because, the agreement clearly states that those employees who had been arrested under charges of sabotage, damage to Railway property and violence would not be released; nor in their case would departmental actions and punitive measures would be withdrawn. This clause is wide enough and can be made as wide as the authorities wish it to be to bring any locomen under its mischief for participation in the agitation. Particularly in view of past experience, the practice of the Railway authorities and the method of functioning of the police in our country, there is a serious need for the locomen to look with apprehension at this clause in the agreement and for being on the guard against any possible attack by the Government on the basis of this clause.

Moratorium on Strike

We all know that the Government is now making all sorts of moves to take away the right of the workers to strike. The President and the Prime Minister of India had already openly declared that they wanted the working class in our country to voluntarily declare a moratorium on strike for the next three years. The Government, not satisfied with making this request, had imposed a ban on strikes by the railwaymen and the FCI employees under the DIR. In the circumstance, it

was expected that the leadership of the AILRSA would seriously press for the withdrawal of the ban on strike and oppose the move to impose moratorium on strike. They have not only not done it, on the contrary, they themselves have declared a moratorium on strike for the next three years thereby surrendering the interests of the locomen to the fascistic demand the President and the Prime Minister had been making. This is, no doubt, a shameful betrayal of the workers' cause.

Other Points

Then again, we cannot but note that the choice of time for the agitation by the leadership of the AILRSA has been most unfortunate. As has already been stated that a real opportunity for developing a bigger movement uniting all sections of the railwaymen for the realisation of the vital demands of theirs actually opened up by the notice of strike on 27th August served on the Railway authorities. We have no illusion about the character of the AIRF leadership. Only under pressure by the railway men from the bottom this leadership were ultimately compelled to give a call for strike. The unilateral agitation by the locomen led by the AILRSA and the unsatisfactory settlement of that agitation between the government and the loco running staff has not only dealt a severe blow to the possibility of developing a broader struggle uniting all sections of the railwaymen thereby negating to a large extent the possibility of realising the common demands like payment of bonus to all, need-based wage to all, etc. but also provided the AIRF leadership with an excuse to escape from the path of movement, resulting in withdrawal of the strike notice by them. This is no mean damage to the genuine cause of the railway men.

Our Appeal

Be that as it may, we appeal to the railwaymen to
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Statement by Kerala State Organising Committee, SUCI

The Kerala State Organising Committee of the SUCI has issued the following statement to the Press on the fast-deteriorating food situation in the state and the indifference of the so-called big left parties to develop united movements against price rise and food problem :

"We view with serious concern the steep rise in prices of all essential commodities, virtual break-down of the rationing system of the Government and the alarming food situation in the state. It goes without saying that Kerala has been a victim of chronic food problem since the independence of our country mainly because of the pro-capitalist anti-people economic, fiscal, credit and food policies of the Congress governments at the Centre and in the state, leaving apart the present capitalist system in our country which is basically responsible for all the problems and sufferings of our people.

"This being the reality, to check the spiralling of prices, hold price line within the reach of common men, ease the food problem at least to some extent and give some measure of relief to the acutely distressed people, it is necessary to develop a sustained mighty mass movement against the ruling Congress party, the governments run by it and their anti-people policies and compel them to give up unbridled deficit financing, reduce indirect taxation on essential articles, stop the granting of loans and advances to the big business against food articles and other essential commodities, confiscate black money, introduce all-out state-trading in essential goods, give exemplary punishment to the hoarders, speculators monopolists and price-manipulators and ensure regular and equitable distribution of food articles and other necessities of life at fair prices through fair price shops.

"In the circumstances, to remain united with the Congress in a political front and

run the administration of the state in alliance with the Congress on one hand and at the same time talk of conducting movements against the black-marketeers without touching a hair of the Congress and Congress Governments, whose policies are engendering price rise and black-marketing and protecting the hoarders, speculators, monopolists and price-manipulators is to practise fraud on the people, exploit their sufferings and misdirect their indignation from the real enemy for petty sectarian anti-people party interests. The so-called consumers' resistance movement and anti hoarder movement by the ruling Congress party, the CPI and other parties running the administration in the state are mock-fights and diversionary tactics designed to serve those anti-people party interests. The people must harbour no illusion about these parties and these so called movements by them.

"The CPI(M) also is interested not so much in developing a sustained united mass movement to alleviate the sufferings of the people owing to price rise and food crisis as in fishing in troubled water, exploiting the sentiments of the people and making political capital for prospects in election. In spite of repeated appeals by the SUCI to forge a unity of all the left and democratic parties and forces on the basis of an agreed programme and code of conduct conducive to the development of a sustained united mass movement, the CPI(M) has not shown any interest in forging such a unity. On the contrary, it is out to make a common cause with such parties of right reaction as the Con-

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indulge in rank opportunism and reduce democracy to shambles but all the same the ideal of bourgeois nationalism will create a new life, a new culture, a new sense of morality and human values to inspire the people to ungrudgingly face all consequences to lead society to progress—such a thinking is absurd. It does not happen. So, if our people can keep themselves free from the pernicious influence of bourgeois nationalism, imbibe themselves with the ideal of communism and proletarian internationalism and take part in revolutionary struggles under the leadership of a real revolutionary working class party then and then only the present suffocating moral crisis in our country will find its solution.

Sm. Indira Gandhi, who has demanded unstinted support for all the policies of the government and sacrifice from the people, has a motive behind this call. This appeal is not meant for those handful of persons who exercise control over the entire economy of the country, appropriate among themselves about sixty per cent of the total national income and amass fabulous profits from the pro-jotedar, pro-capitalist

gress(O), the Kerala Congress, etc.

"We request the CPI(M) to give up opportunist politics and come forward to unite the left and democratic parties and forces in Kerala and develop a sustained united mass movement against the ruling Congress, the Central Government, the State Government and their anti-people policies for bringing down prices of essential commodities and ease the food problem. We call upon the people to put pressure on the CPI(M) and other left and democratic parties so that they, in the greater interest of the people, move in this direction."

policies of the Congress governments which are making them richer everyday. It is not difficult to understand that it is the toiling masses again who have been chosen for fresh economic onslaughts by the Prime Minister, that is, the majority of our people who live below the poverty line and have been hit hard due to unprecedented rise in price level during the recent months shall be subjected to still heavier burden of exploitation in the near future and the common people must unhesitatingly accept this advice of the Prime Minister so that the monopolists, the big businessmen, the top bureaucrats the Congress leaders and other high-ups in society can enjoy all the fruits of Congress 'socialism'—the ruling class and their henchmen think in this way. Despite all these 'pro-people' deeds by the ruling Congress those who still view the Congress as reactionary and do not find progressiveness in Sm. Gandhi and her radical followers are only fit to be ignored and pitied—the CPI friends are still thinking in this way and the CPM also, it seems from their present activities, is gradually inclining towards this type of thinking. One will not do justice to the CPM if one thinks that such a thinking is altogether new to the CPM or has never been preached by it before. But the question is how long the toiling millions who are under increasing exploitation by the ruling capitalist class and completely exhausted by the so-called progressive role of the Congress will remain calm by the sweet promises of the Congress leaders aided by the friendly criticism of their so-called Marxist friends. Facts have demonstrated that the people have realised at least to some extent the dirty game of the ruling party. The left and democratic parties should rise to the occasion and lead the masses to a sustained united movement. That is the need of the hour.

Police Behaves As Criminals

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worst criminals with the people, particularly the poor people, themselves breaking the law and committing all sorts of criminal acts. It is because of such criminal activities on the part of the police in our country that Justice Mulla of the Allahabad High Court was once obliged to observe in one of his judgments that the police force in our country was the most organised gang of goondas enjoying the protection of law and the established order.

All these facts are known to the Congress rulers of India. But during the long period of twenty-six years since the independence of India they are so engaged in making pulpit speeches, drawing rosy pictures of future "democratically socialist" India, stressing the need of leading a life of plain living and high thinking on Gandhian model and, last but not least, in running at break-neck speed after power and pelf that they hardly have any time left to eliminate by suitable laws and other appropriate measures the colonial heritage of the police, thoroughly re-orientate them in keeping with democratic principles consistent with the growing democratic aspirations of the people of free India as distinguished from India under British imperialist rule and compel the police to function democratically and behave with civility with the public. The Union Home Minister expressed on the floor of the Lok Sabha "sadness and distress" over the incident in Gohalpur. He and his predecessors had in the past expressed such sadness and distress many many times. His counter-parts in the different states also had expressed sadness and distress on similar occasions. But those expressions of sadness and distress over police vandalism and criminal activities of the so-called custodians of law and order against

common men in general, particularly against the poor and socially backward communities, being formal, they have failed to prevent the police from committing crimes against the citizens. Had the Congress rulers been serious and sincere about removing the colonial heritage of the police in our country and compelling them to function democratically and behave with civility with the members of the public, irrespective of the latter's so-called social status, then they would have made a thorough revision of the Police Code and other laws, departmental orders and departmental set-up and adopted other appropriate measures for the purpose. The Congress rulers have done nothing in that direction. On the contrary, they have of late introduced a Bill to amend the Indian Penal Code, which is the Bible to the police in our country, in which more power has been sought to be given to the police. It may seem surprising but this is a fact that in the amending Bill the police has been given protection from any legal action by an individual citizen for an offence committed by the police violating an order of the court, thereby providing the police with more powers to act more arbitrarily and criminally against the citizens than before. It should, however, be noted that it is not only the Congress rulers who are guilty of this criminal negligence to take necessary steps to prevent the police from committing criminal acts and to compel them to function democratically and behave with civility with the members of the public. Those parties whose leaders had occupied the chairs of Home Minister in different states, other than the Congress, also exhibited the same criminal indifference during their Ministry.

It should be realised that the police is one of the organs

of the state which again is the organ of class rule in a country. In a capitalist society like ours, the basic function of the police is to defend and serve the basic interest of the ruling bourgeois class. The laws, the legal system, the legal institution, etc. perform the same function. In this sense, in the revolutionary struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat the laws, legal institution, the police etc. are neither neutral nor supra-class; they are defenders of bourgeois interests. But even under bourgeois democracy the police is supposed to function democratically in a relative sense to uphold the rule of law. The police in our country does not so function.

In the tradition of the police in a colonial country, the police in our country even now implicates innocent persons in false criminal cases, brings false charges against persons, fabricates false evidence, applies third degree methods to extort so-called confession in the line dictated by the police, illegally detains persons in lock-up, assaults persons without any provocation and even murders persons under their custody or in open streets. Over and above all these criminal acts, ransacking the houses and looting of properties in the name of search, raping, etc. are also committed by the police. All these criminal acts are done under the garb of maintenance of law and order and, so, are duly protected by law under the saving clause in the statutes which provides that for anything done or intended to be done in good faith no action

would lie against the police. This saving clause absolves the police of all the criminal acts done by them under the pretext of maintenance of law and order.

In view of the Evidence Act and other laws now in force in our country, the attitude of the administration and the Congress Ministry towards the police in their relation with the people, particularly the poor people and the system of administration of justice, we are definite that the police officers, the police men and the doctor guilty of committing the crimes on the Harijans of Gahlour village or of abetment in the crime will go unpunished. But should our people allow the police, the administration and the Ministry to go scot free? We think that it is high time that every left and democratic party and democratically minded people should unitedly move for a thorough re-orientation of the police in keeping with the democratic aspirations of the people so as to prevent the police from committing criminal acts in the name of maintenance of law and order as also to compel them to function and behave with the public in a manner in which the police in a democratic country is expected to behave. Such a movement is long overdue in the interest of safeguarding the legitimate democratic rights of the people in the face of increasing encroachments by the ruling bourgeoisie and its political representatives running the administration of the country upon civil liberties.

People's Emancipation Pledge Day in Assam

Gauhati, August 15—Under the auspices of the Assam State Committee of the SUCI, 15th of August was observed as People's Emancipation Pledge Day. In this connection a well-attended public meeting was held at Nobin Bardaloi Hall under the presidentship of Com. Prabhat Khatanar.

Com. Asit Bhattacharya, Secretary of the Assam State Committee of the SUCI, who was the main speaker in the meeting, in explaining the

reason for observing the day as People's Emancipation Pledge Day, said that though the country had achieved

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Joint Meetings by SUCI, RSP and Forward Bloc

Calcutta, August 26—To organise the masses politically and organisationally for the development of a sustained united mighty mass movement against steep rise in prices of all essential articles and food crisis, the West Bengal State Committees of the SUCI, the RSP and the Forward Bloc have launched a mass campaign for mobilising public opinion in that direction through a series of public meetings in different parts of West Bengal.

In pursuance of this programme big meetings were held at Ballygunge, Kalighat, Maniktola and Ultadanga in Calcutta, at Behala and Naihati in the district of 24 Parganas and other districts. Speakers from the three parties in their speeches explained the necessity of developing a sustained united movement against the ruling Congress party, the governments run by it at Centre and in the state and their anti-people policies, if prices were to be brought down within the purchasing power of the people. On behalf of the SUCI coms. Subodh Banerjee, Ranjit Dhar, Provas Ghosh, Asutosh Banerjee, Fatick Ghosh and Gayatri Das Gupta addressed these meetings. Speakers from the RSP and the Forward Bloc included Nikhil Das and Chitta Bose.

Addressing the meetings at Behala and Naihati, Com. Subodh Banerjee elaborately explained with necessary statistics how the economic, fiscal, taxation, credit and food policies of the Congress governments at the Centre and in West Bengal were pushing up the prices of all essential articles, creating favourable grounds for open black-marketing and protecting in actuality, under the smoke-screen of mock-fight against black-marketing, the hoarders, speculators, monopolists and price-manipulators to the accentuation of the miseries and sufferings of common men in the country. He also explained why wholesale state-trading was bound to fail and why it was necessary to introduce all-out state-trading in essential commodities to ensure regular

and equitable supply of them at fair prices to the consuming public. Com. Banerjee then showed how the Congress was equipping itself with fascistic measures of repression and the futility of any sporadic and one day's movement and the necessity of developing a sustained united mighty mass movement if one would want to force the government to lower the prices and give some measure of relief to the distressed people. In this connection he referred to the history of how the eight parties at the initiative and insistence of the SUCI unitedly with the RSP and the Forward Bloc adopted the programme for developing a sustained united mass movement, including bandh and, if necessary, a continuous bandh, how the CPI with the sole purpose of disrupting the possibilities of development of such a movement gave a call for bandh on July 27 and why the CPI(M), betraying the programme unanimously adopted by the eight parties, including the CPI(M), for developing a sustained movement and disrupting the unity of the left and democratic parties and forces, that was developing in West Bengal through the eight-party combination, supported the call for bandh given by the CPI. In this connection Com. Banerjee dealt with the recent resolution of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) which had held the formation of a united front of the left and democratic parties on the basis of a programme as impractical in the present circumstances and explained how the party was moving to be closer to and

better its relations with the CPI and the ruling Congress, in spite of its verbal attacks still continuing against them for electoral exigency in West Bengal and Kerala. He then exposed the hollowness of the so-called consumers' resistance movement by the Congress and the so-called dehoarding drive of the CPI. He characterised these moves as mock-fights and diversionary tactics to deceive the people, exploit their sentiment against the black-marketeers, misdirect their indignation away from the real culprits responsible for the present abnormal price-rise and black-marketing and serve their petty anti-people party interests. Com. Banerjee concluded his speech by laying before the people the programme adopted by the eight parties for developing a sustained united movement, which the three parties, namely, the SUCI, the RSP and the Forward Bloc, were carrying forward and calling upon them to back it by all means so as to develop a sustained united mighty movement and compel the governments to concede to the demands of the people to bring down the prices of essential commodities within the purchasing power of the people, ensure their regular supply in equitable quantity and punish severely the hoarders, speculators, black-marketeers and unscrupulous businessmen.

LOCO STRIKE

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realise that at this time no separate or sporadic partial struggle of this or that category of railwaymen is desirable. Because, it may create confusion among the railwaymen, offer an opportunity to the Railway authorities to disrupt the unity of the railwaymen as a whole and weaken their united struggles. It is time for developing united struggles of the railwaymen. Serious and sincere attempts should, therefore, be made to develop such a movement on the agreed demands for the realisation of which the call for strike on and from 27th August was given by the AIRF. That is a must for the railwaymen.

PEOPLE'S EMANCIPATION PLEDGE DAY IN ASSAM

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political independence, emancipation of the people was yet to be achieved. Through the transfer of power on this day twenty-six years back political rule of the British imperialists over India had come to an end with the national reformist section of the Indian bourgeoisie, that was leading the anti-imperialist national liberation movement, capturing state power through compromise with foreign imperialism and establishing its own state, a bourgeois national state in our country. Com. Bhattacharya elaborately explained how with the establishment of this bourgeois national state, Indian capitalism had made relatively the freest, widest and speediest development possible in the prevailing situation, our people were being subjected to increasing exploitation and the country was being taken slowly but steadily along the path of fascism. The aspiration of the people for complete emancipation from all sorts of exploitation not being fulfilled, there was the need of overthrowing the ruling bourgeoisie from state power, smashing the exploitative capitalist state machine and establish socialism, which would free our people from exploitation of man by man. He concluded by saying that this being the reality, our people must renew their pledge on this day to carry forward their struggle till they would gain complete emancipation from all sorts of exploitation, economic, political, social and cultural.

The meeting adopted five resolutions on various problems of Assam and vital demands of its people.

Coms. Siddheswar Sharma, Indu Bhowmic, Prabhat Barman, Jugal Kalita and the President of the meeting in their speeches called upon the people to strengthen the SUCI by all means so as to ensure the development of a sustained united mighty mass movement in Assam.